
Poetry | FALL 2016

Under Morning Sun in a Cloudless Sky

By Ellen Sazzman

Under morning sun in a cloudless sky

his balded head squeezed into a baseball cap,
he stands at the helm of his motorboat,

grips the tiller of the outboard
and revs up the throttle. The rest of us,

puffy in neon life jackets,
grab the bow's gunwales and hang on

as the prow starts to rise and fall
and the boat accelerates, leaving behind

the slow drip of vein-flooding infusions.
We speed faster and faster, lifting up, thwacking

down against the water's shellacked surface –
my stomach heaves

and we bounce ever higher in the wake,
boats skittering out of our path shooting straight

toward the low-hanging Sassafras River bridge
we'll never clear and I turn panicked

to see the look on his face of lunacy or lucidity
as he pulls harder on the throttle to take us

good friends together on his truncated journey
before he turns the boat starboard

in a graceful arc the way gulls curve up and away.

Ellen Sazzman has recently been published in Moment, Comstock Review, Beltway Quarterly, Common Ground, CALYX, and Poetica, among others. I was a winner of the 2016 Moving Words Poetry Competition and a finalist in the 2010 Split This Rock poetry contest. I received Northern Virginia Review's 2012 outstanding poetry award, a Pushcart nomination from Bloodroot Literary Magazine, and honorable mentions in the Anna Rosenberg poetry contest. I am a mother, grandmother and retired lawyer living in Maryland.

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